

Total Reform: The Ephraim Atrocity

by Obsidios

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Summary: From across the country, eighteen troubled youths are consigned to a controversial reformatory, headed by the disgraced Colonel Maxwell McLean, in a last-ditch effort to save them from themselves. Little do they know that their arrival has awakened a darkness as old as the Earth, and with each passing day, they crawl towards one of the darkest moments in history. Applications Open

1. Prelude I: Harvest of the Lost

"When I was a kid, my dad was a Colonel in the U.S. Army. I was born when he was stationed in Newfoundland, and then all we really ever did was move around until he and my mom split up when I was fifteen. We relocated to Toronto, and I stopped hearing from him after a while. We didn't learn about his retirement until, like, eleven months after it happened.

Anyway, growing up, I remember he was never one for taking it easy on me, or Anton, really. He said that kids needed authority and guidance more than anything, and that the reason there was so much wrong with the country was because people were too soft on their kids. When I got in trouble as a teenager, his favorite threat was that he would send me to military school.

I got the call last year that he'd purchased the rights to Total Drama after the network dropped the franchise. I figured he just wanted the brand to spite me, because he never approved much of the series.

I had no idea that he would do something like this."

__Television mogul Chris McLean, son of Maxwell McLean, on his father's involvement.__

* * *

><p>On August 25th, 2016, the **_Total Reform Youth Correctional Facility at Ephraim Ridge, _**_established a mere seven months prior __was destroyed. Most of the staff was killed, and the head of the institution, former U.S. Colonel Maxwell McLean, has been documented as 'missing'._

_Unearthed by the conflagration was a chronicle so horrifying that the nation decreed a forthwith criminalization of similar private-owned facilities, punishable by a fine of \$500,000 USD and life incarceration. ____The company responsible for the institution was subsequently indicted for multiple counts of inhumane practice.__

For fear of copycat crimes, the story of what transpired at Ephraim Ridge has yet to be told fully to the public.

Until now.

* * *

><p>August 5th, 2016**

_0300 Hours (MST) _

You think it's the wind at first, mostly because - in your stupor - you're certain you left the window open before you went to bed. When it doesn't go away like a draft normally would, then you assume it to be a bug of some sort and make a sluggish effort to bat it away. It comes back when your hand bats it off and, irritably, you crack one eye open.

In the dim lighting, all you make out is the glint from a nearby streetlight onto something made of metal resting against your cheekbone. It's only when you raise your eyes, a horrible panic burning its way through your chest, that you realize it's a pair of handcuffs, and it's being held by one of two men standing over you.

One of them, the taller of the two, leers down at you through yellow teeth.

"Mornin', cutie."

Before you can react, the two of them have you wrestled out of your bed and onto the ground, snorting with cruel laughter as you struggle in your stupor to fight them off. When you finally manage to draw breath enough to scream, a calloused hand slams itself over your mouth with enough force to make you taste blood. Cold sweat mixes with hot tears that you'd never admit to shedding as they hoist you up by the skin on the back of your neck and restrain you and drag you out of your bedroom, out of your home.

There's a van parked at the end of your driveway, stark white against midnight fog. The first thing you notice about it is that there aren't any side windows, and it's flanked on either side by armed men keeping onlookers away. Every struggle from you is met with a kick to the ankle or a tightening of someone's grip wrenching your shoulder back. For all your protests, your pleas for help at the stony-faced onlookers, they manage to force you into the vehicle. There aren't any seats for anyone other than the driver and the passenger, both of

which are protected behind a layer of glass.

Someone approaches the van slowly, and your heart breaks as you lift your eyes to them.

Perhaps it's a mother or a father or a grandparent. An older sibling, or a guardian of some sort. It's the owner of the name that you screamed for help when you were being assaulted in your bedroom moments prior. There's a dejected resolution to their stance that tells you they your trust that they would help you was gravely misplaced. If they themselves hadn't directly consigned you to this fate, they at least had no intent of stopping it.

The guards shove you past your guardian and wrestle to the floor of the vehicle, handcuffing your limp wrist to a latch beneath you. All that goes through your mind is: _I don't deserve this_

You look up, pleading silently, and you can feel your heartbeat turn to an earthquake; beating so hard that the places where it's breaking split away like shattering glass within your chest. Your betrayer stand over you, their arms folded and their lips constantly pinching themselves into a thin line. They draw a shuddering breath before they finally look you in the eyes, the cold resolve in their gaze like a thousand arrows in your flesh as the van roars to life and the guards pour into the van, all of them pointing their guns at you. Your guardian takes a few deliberate steps back, away from the van and away from you.

They say, softly, "I'm sorry. I love you."

And then they, and your entire world, vanish as the door slams shut and plunges you once more into darkness.

The car speeds down roads, throwing you against the walls and across the floor in rough and disorienting turns. Through the numbness that has gripped you in the fade of the panic, you feel something press against your leg, something you vaguely remember falling asleep with.

You shake your head, terror and betrayal and dread cooling together as a miserable knot in your chest. You lean back and rest your head against the back wall, closing your eyes and hoping, praying, against all logic that this is merely a nightmare you can wake up from. Of course, you'll never wake up. This much, at least, you know for certain.

Hours pass, though you don't feel them. Rather, you merely measure them subconsciously as telltale sunlight trickles into the back of the van. One numb eternity later, the door opens and suddenly your seized by the guards and thrown onto sun-scorched red clay, the combined intensity of the heat and the sunlight greeting you like a strike to the face. The two men that attacked you earlier flank you on either side and yank you to your feet. You see other vans with other youths being dragged out, but another series of rough shoves by the guards forces you to avert your eyes. Someone thrusts you toward a weatherbeaten campground enclosed in a chain-link fence that spans into the horizon, crowned with a laurel-wreath of barbed wire.

A sign bolstered on the main gate reads: _Ephraim Ridge Youth Correctional Institution_

One of the guards, the shorter one this time, grips you by the chin and forces your ear to his lips.

"Welcome to Total Reform."

* * *

><p>-General-**

Full Legal Name:

Nicknames, if applicable:

Sex:

Gender, if applicable:

Pronouns (If they identify on the gender binary, their pronouns will be "he/him" or "she/her" respectively):

Ethnicity:

Tag (equatable to stereotype):

~Physical~

Age (below eighteen, obviously):

Hair:

Eyes:

Skin:

Body Type:

Identifying Features (tattoos, birthmarks, ect):

Medical Conditions, if applicable (Mental disorders are allowed but will not be glamorized. I urge you to consider that before you send me a character with MPD or something):

~Personal~

Home (state and city):

Personality (I shouldn't have to say this but DETAIL!):

Biography (Same as above. Be creative.):

Family:

Sexual
Orientation:

Fears:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Likes:

Dislikes:

****Criminal****

Criminal/Delinquent History (why are they here?):

Greatest Secret (Remember that not everybody here has to have a police record; people can be sent to Ephraim for anything):

* * *

><p>I have three major prerequisites for all potential applicants:

****1) Send applications through PM and PM alone. Any and all applications in the reviews will be disregarded.****

****2) As aforementioned, I expect depth, creativity and originality in my cast. Make me a character people would want to read about. My advice to you is to put some serious thought into your OC's backstory and what they did to warrant consignment at Total Reform.****

****3) This story is based mostly in angst and in drama, and will therefore take some rather dark turns. While it isn't possible to be eliminated, your character may die. By sending in a character, you are telling me that you are alright with this.****

****So, what'll it be? Do you think you have what it takes to survive Total Reform?****

****If the answer is 'yes', then I hope for your sake that you're right.****

****Ã€ bientÃ´t, j'espÃ¨re.****

****Obsidios****

2. Prelude II: One Year Prior

****August 5th, 2015****

****1400 Hours (MST)****

When Aiyana Locklear dismounted from her nephew's car, no one looked up. Her mind instinctively flicked back to when she was a young girl living on this land when it was still a reservation. When a strange vehicle pulled up, it was usually a cause for alarm. But now, her village had been destroyed. Total Reform had seen to that when the annexed the reservation for it's proximity to Ephraim Ridge.

In a few weeks, her childhood home would be a prison camp.

The old woman's steps were brisk and painful. Each movement was an alarming game of chance against her arthritic joints, backed by the metallic roll of her oxygen tank behind her. She would've loved to

rest, to sit for even a moment, but it couldn't be afforded. Every moment she delayed was a moment closer that these people were to ruin.

"You can't cross the picket!" a young man yelled at her, stopping her in her tracks at the gate. He was one of many in a massive congregation of protesters that had pooled around the barbed-wire fence of the entranceway.

She assumed him to be a teenager by looking at him, maybe seventeen at the most; with lank hair that fell to his shoulders and a haunting gauntness to his face, his hollow cheeks red and his eyes streaming tears. He'd taken off his shirt, presumably from the heat, and held a sign over his head bearing broad letters that she was too close to read. Mrs. Locklear gave him a sympathetic look.

"I used to live here," she shouted at him over the din of the crowd. "I need him off this land too, more than you know."

The young man clutched his signpost for a moment before nodding at her and moving out of her way, quickly resuming his chanting of abuse at the guards barring he and his comrades entrance to the grounds.

She marched past his fellow protesters and the staff at the front gate; the preoccupied men and women in suits, arguing on cellphones; the workers standing by newly-constructed buildings atop the ruins of homes and stores where her friends and family once lived; until, finally, she stood before the office door of the man she'd come to see. His name read on a simple metal placard by the doorframe.

Col. _Maxwell McLean_

She took a deep breath before entering, not bothering to knock. There was no time for that.

The office was sparsely furnished; a few framed diplomas and certificates, a large desk overladen with memorabilia from organizations she didn't recognize, and a few curt-looking appurtenances scattered throughout the space. The man whom she assumed to be the Colonel stood facing a large window that was opposite to the door, his hands folded behind his back and his shoulders erect in annoyance at the crowd of screaming people outside the fence. Even though he faced away from her, there was a coldness to his being that told her he was more than aware of her presence. Still, she stood her ground.

"Another reporter?" groused the Colonel, the mocking snarl in his tone cutting any cordiality from the exchange. "Don't you think that you're a little old for this?"

The old woman sighed. "My name is Aiyana Locklear, Colonel, and I used to live here."

At this, he turned to her. Maxwell McLean was a tall man with broad shoulders and small, sunken eyes. He wore a green t-shirt and camouflage pants alongside an intimidating pair of boots made of thick brown leather. It must've been years since he'd seen combat, and yet he still looked like he could and would kill a man with his

bare hands if ordered to.

McLean gave a low huff of exasperation. "I figured this would happen eventually. Look, I get that that reserve is sacred to you people because of some tribal shit, but my firm-

"I'm not here because you stole my land, sir," she cut him off, and his eyes narrowed at her.

"I didn't steal anything. Your council sold that land to Total Reform."

It was a common argument she'd heard concerning the land, but never one she was stupid enough to be led to believe. "What choice did you and your lawyers give them?" she asked with a hollow smile. "Sell it off, or simply let you throw them off the land yourself, like you did with the other reservations."

His eyes narrowed further, and lowered her head in false humility.

"Oh, now, I can't prove it. But you know as well as I that your men's thieving fingerprints are all over Ephraim Ridge. But like I said, that isn't why I'm here. I'm here to warn you before you make yet another grave mistake."

"What do you mean another?"

He hadn't offered her a seat, so she helped herself to a hard-looking plastic chair in front of the desk. "What a sad little office this is. Does that other door," she jerked her thumb behind her to a chipped wooden door on the wall opposite of the desk, "lead to a bedroom? Don't tell me that you're living in here. Whatever must your poor wife think?"

The Colonel moved from the window and took a seat at his desk, looking over the applications he had pulled up on his computer. "I'm not married anymore."

"Ah, I see," she replied. Her eyes roved up to a single framed picture atop a nearby filing cabinet. A younger version of the man before her smiled at her with a smug pride, his arms slung around the two boys flanking him on either side. One of them, obviously the elder of the two, looked considerably more elated at his situation than his brother. "Then, those boys in that picture? Who are they?"

The Colonel looked up briefly from his screen, still scowling at an email he'd been sent about some little prick from Michigan who got busted with pot. He followed her gaze to the picture on his cabinet. "Those are my kids, when they were younger."

Mrs. Locklear seemed to tense behind her smile. "I might've known. I see your boy on my television all the time, especially when my niece comes to visit. She was so distraught to hear of the cancellation of that program of his. But you must be so proud; even fifteen fleeting seconds of fame is better than no notoriety at all."

At this, the old man gave a cold guffaw at the picture. "I haven't spoken to Chris in years. Had a good head in his shoulders, but he

was soft as all Hell. Stenciled little punk would never've lasted in combat."

Mrs. Locklear blinked at him, seemingly undeterred by his callousness. "And the other?"

"Kid on the left is my other son, Anton. Best goddamn soldier in my unit, when he served with me."

There was a marked change in his tone, not a softening but a different kind of harshness, that confirmed a superstition that was brewing in the old woman's chest.

"My condolences, Colonel."

The old man shook his head, his fist clenched, and slotted himself a curt shrug. "Long time ago."

Mrs. Locklear pursed her lips at the awkward silence that bloomed between them, only slightly abated by the chants of the protesters outside. Many of them were students from the nearby university, activists angry about the desecration of her tribe's reservation, or locals angry at the loss of the casino on the property. The young man who'd stopped her had made his way to the front of the picketers, his face still flushed and his eyes still oozing in furious rivulets. Only now, now that she could get a good look at him, could she see why. His bare torso was covered in twisted fissures and burn scars too intricate to ever be accidental; most of his right arm looked as though he'd stuck it in a paper shredder.

His sign, painted in dark crimson ink obviously meant to emulate blood, read: "_THIS IS WHAT THEIR REFORMATION LOOKS LIKE!_"

"Damn pothead hippies," the Colonel's voice tore her from her horror. "Come in here with their hearts bleeding all over the ground, screaming about isolated incidents."

She clamped her teeth down on her tongue to stop herself from responding. All she could think about was her career teaching high school back when she lived in Scottsdale in the eighties. Two of her English III students, Jace Masterson and his brother Adam, were sent away after a prank went wrong. They were both nice boys, mischievous perhaps but never malicious, certainly undeserving of the wilderness therapy program they were placed in to be paraded around through the desert without adequate food or water. Adam perished of heatstroke out there, and the other inmates retaliated by burning the instructor's alive in their tents. They had assumed Jace dead as well when they couldn't find his body and she herself had given a beautiful eulogy at their service.

She would've loved to have asked the Colonel, then and there, if that was indeed what their idea of reformation was. If the scars, the tears, and the funerals that happened along the way were worth the fear-based obedience that they instilled in the children that were given over to them. Instead, she merely shook her head.

"I'd like to talk to you about this land, Colonel."

His gaze still trained on the scene outside his window, McLean gave an impatient grunt in response that she took to mean she could

continue.

She took a deep breath. "When I was a young woman, I left my reservation, as many of the youths would. But it wasn't from conflicting ideals, and it certainly wasn't because I was headed for somewhere better. I wanted a family of my own, and that couldn't happen there. You see, as long as we lived in that village, on Ephraim Ridge, we were forbidden from having children. It was the decision of my people, for the good of us all."

McLean shook his head incredulously. "That doesn't make any sense. If people didn't have kids, your tribe would've gone extinct generations ago."

"I didn't say people didn't still have children, Colonel. Parenthood was merely a necessary evil. A game of faith and of chance for those who played. Some did anyway, of course, for the very reason you mentioned, but they were always special cases chosen by elders, not simple civilians like I was. Tragedy fell every generation, it became too commonplace really, but enough survived to keep us from oblivion."

"Tragedy?"

"That land has a history far beyond what my council has told you, more than likely. The soil there is as old as the Earth, far older, and far darker, than we could ever conceive. But as long as we have lived here in this desert, whatever else that was here with us has preyed on us, bit by bit. If it didn't kill our offspring outright, it would change them, corrupt them, into something like itself."

McLean glowered at her from behind the desk. "You aren't making any sense."

"Ephraim Ridge has been where, for centuries, children have gone to be destroyed."

The Colonel gave a derisive snort. "You're lying, or you're just batshit insane."

"Am I? October 1928, Ephraim Ridge is settled for the first time around a boarding school. Ten months later, both stand deserted, thousands of people simply gone and the only clue remaining is one of the teachers crucified in the town square. December 1941, a labor farm for Japanese youths is established here, only to be destroyed during a prison riot within the month. August 1987, the Three North Wilderness Therapy Institute is disbanded after all of the instructors are burned to death by the inmates. Every time children are led into this desert, both they and those who brought them here have fallen to grievous misfortune."

McLean abandoned his work and rose to his feet, his chin raised.

"Yeah, and you know what each of those cases have in common? There's always been overwhelming suspicion that your tribe, the Kovanah people, have had something to do with the massacres." His lips lifted into a mocking smirk. "That's one of the reasons we bought the land, you know. To keep corrosive influences like you away from the

program."

Mrs. Locklear opened her mouth and then closed it again, almost beside herself with rage. "How dare you?" she hissed at him, as though she were spitting acid in his smirking face. "My people have always been nothing but peaceful, even when you and your devils came traipsing all over our homes to build your little torture-playground. I came here myself to keep you from making a great mistake!"

McLean gave a humorless bark of laughter. "Spare me that. You came here to scare me off, playing up the whole shamanistic old desert woman bit, thinking I'd be stupid enough to fall for it and give you back your reservation."

The old woman's heart thundered furiously in her ears. "You're wrong! You're about to lead yourself, your workers, and people's sons and daughters into utter destruction! Just like you lead your troop--"

"_Shut up_!"

Mrs. Locklear lowered herself back into her chair, looking at the man before her as he huffed like a winded rhinoceros. She turned her face away timidly. She should've known better than to bring that up.

"I will not be spoken down to by some peyote-crazed medicine woman," spat McLean. "The people that come here aren't victims. They're criminals that need to be corrected before they become a danger to themselves and to society. I'm here to do my job."

"You're a fool," she grouched, a note of dejection lacing her words.

"I'm done entertaining your idiocy. Either get out now or I'll have someone escort you off the premises."

The old woman pursed her thin lips and raised her chin defiantly. "No need for force, thank you," she replied in a voice simply drenched in honey. "I'll show myself out."

And then, as she struggled to raise her old bones, she said merely, "You bring this on yourself, you know."

She stood tall, forced her glare into his for another moment, and then turned on her heel and took her leave, clicking the door shut behind her as she went.

* * *

><p>Males:

1. Bastion Davenport - The Sex Doll (Vainglory deLuxe)

2. Miles Jackson - The Amputee (LacedUp)

3. Lauro Aihara - The Roleplayer (Kukasabe Swift)

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

Females:

1. Armistice "Cissi" Reeves - The Soubrette (Toxic Smiling)

**2. Caroline Sumito - The Firecracker
(I'mNotShortI'mFunsized)**

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

This list will be amended as I receive more applicants, so I encourage you to keep checking back here. There likely won't be any more chapters until the start of the actual story.

A few things about the applications.

1) Still send them through PM, and still keep being creative.

2) Preface Tags with 'The'. (Example: "The Backstabber" or "The Coward")

3) Gender and sex are not the same thing. Someone can be biologically male and identify as a woman, and vice versa. That's why I also asked for the pronouns they use.

That's everything for now. Keep the apps coming in.

À bientÃ´t,

>Obsidios

End
file.